

## REMARKS

Applicants hereby offer preliminary amendments to the present application to place the application in better form for allowance.

Applicants have canceled Claims 1-10 in favor of replacement Claims 11-21 to correct certain informalities (including avoidance of multiple dependencies, and avoidance of use claims) and to clarify the intended meaning of the claims without materially altering their scope. Applicants note with respect to Claim 14 that the definition of group R of Claim 14 has been corrected so that the definitions in Claims 13 and 14 are consistent with the preferences given in the specification at page 5, line 9. Use Claim 8 has been canceled in favor of method Claims 18 and 19, which are described at page 9, line 12, page 10, line 1. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the claims are fully supported in the specification.

Applicants have amended the specification to change the title to correspond to the English version of the title appearing on the International Application, to capitalize all letters in the title, and to insert a statement of priority. Applicants submit that these amendments serve only to clarify their application and do not alter the scope of their disclosure.

Applicants have amended the Abstract to change the title for the reasons discussed above and to change the heading to a more customary form. A copy of the new Abstract is separately attached.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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# METHOD FOR PRODUCING DIFLUORO-ACETYL ACETIC ACID ALKYL ESTERS

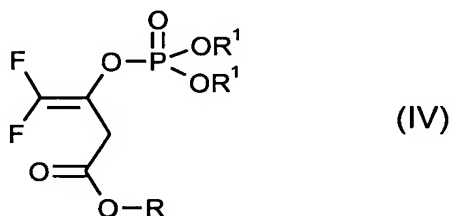
## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention relates to a three-step method for the preparation of alkyl esters of 4,4-difluoroacetoacetic acid in which in the first step alkyl esters of 4-chloro-4,4-difluoroacetic acid are reacted with trialkylphosphites of formula (III)

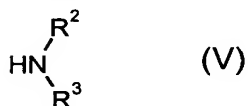


in which  $\text{R}^1$  stands for  $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4\text{-alkyl}$ , whereby the residues  $\text{R}^1$  can in each case be the same or different,

to form alkyl phosphonates of formula (IV)

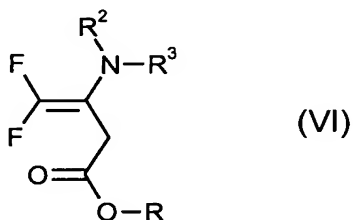


which in the next step are reacted with an amine of formula (V),



in which  $\text{R}^2$  and  $\text{R}^3$  independent of each other stand for hydrogen or  $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4\text{-alkyl}$  or together form  $-\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{-O-CH}_2\text{-CH}_2-$ ,

to form enamines of formula (VI),



in which  $\text{R}^2$  and  $\text{R}^3$  have the meanings described above, which in the third step are hydrolyzed in the presence of an acid.